



# RUN FOR THE WALL

## Quarterly Newsletter

*“We Ride For Those Who Can’t”*

**October 2016**

*NOTE: Run For The Wall and RFTW are trademarks of Run For The Wall, Inc. The use of Run For The Wall and RFTW is strictly prohibited without the expressed written permission of the Board of Directors of Run For The Wall, Inc.*

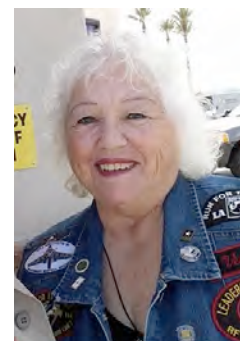
### In This Issue:

- The Editor’s Notes
- Incoming President’s Message
- A 21-Yesr Wait
- Oh, Those Allergies!
- One Member of Doolittle Raiders Remains
- Civil War Vet Cremains Taken Home
- Combat Hero Bike Build
- The Fastest Way to Get a Disability Claim Decision
- VA to Provide Presumptive Service Connection
- Do PTSD Vets Deserve a Purple Heart?
- VA to Provide Presumptive Service Connection
- VA Disability Rating Uses Creative Math
- Forgotten Warrior Memorial Wall
- Zero-Rated Charity Closes
- VA EUL Program for Homeless Vets
- Reunion Reports
- Pending Legislation
- Bringing Them Home
- Sick Call
- Taps

## THE EDITOR’S NOTES

Last Friday I witnessed something so sad it broke my heart. I was attending a regular session of the Lake Havasu Veterans Treatment Court. Those of us on the Court’s Resource Team were seated, as usual, in the jury box.

It was close to 5 p.m. when the last veteran was called before the judge. The courtroom was empty of onlookers except for court personnel and the Resource Team. The final veteran—I’ll call him “John”—approached the bench with his mentor. I had noticed him all afternoon because he was sitting in a very back corner, always with his head down. John has been in the Treatment Court for almost a year now, a period of time when most veterans in the program have turned their lives around and are ready to graduate. By then, they are relaxed and confident and have had the help necessary to go on with a new look on life. But John wasn’t like the rest of them; he had struggled from day one because of his addiction. He was always unshaven and unkempt, always had dirty drug tests, always serving days in jail for missed and dirty tests. He was a prisoner of meth, and we all prayed that he would one day finally break free. During



most of his appearances he was respectful, but mostly he seemed to be in a state of half-consciousness. It was obvious he had problems that might never be resolved.

The Court never gave up on him; everyone working with him just kept having faith in his ability to break the chains. Even when he failed to appear in court and a warrant was issued, when he returned his team continued to give him all the support they could. He had served his country honorably, and he deserved to be helped.

But last Friday a decision had been made. Everyone knew John couldn't do it on his own. The judge was compassionate when he told John what was going to happen. He would be sent, involuntarily, to the VA Domiciliary for intense rehab and treatment for at least several months. The Domiciliary has evolved from a soldiers' home to a clinical rehabilitation and treatment program for veterans, and domiciliary programs are now integrated with the Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Programs. MH RRTPs provide state-of-the-art, high-quality residential rehabilitation and treatment services for Veterans with multiple and severe medical conditions, mental illness, addiction, or psychosocial deficits.

John hung his head low while the judge spoke to him. He was bent over like a broken man, consumed by shame. He asked in a very soft voice if his car would be towed away and what would happen to his dog. The judge told him his car would be taken care of, and his dog also. He also told him that we are all here to help him, and always will be, that we want him to succeed.

The judge quietly told two policemen in the courtroom to take John into custody. The handcuffs went on as John continued to hang his head. He obediently followed the officers out of the courtroom.

I had to wipe tears from my eyes. There are so many broken veterans among us, men and women who were once vibrant and strong and with a future, but now all but destroyed by their addictions. Much of it is caused by their experiences in war, by PTSD, and by traumatic brain injuries. The pain becomes too much for some of them to bear, and they disappear into a drug-induced darkness.

There is help for these veterans, but only if someone finds them and leads them to that help. Please assist these veterans to return to a normal life by volunteering in organizations that know how to find the help they need. Whether it's being a veterans service officer for the VFW, DAV, Marine Corps League, VVA, or American Legion, or as a mentor for a Veterans Treatment Court, or by simply making yourself available to drive veterans to medical appointments, please join those who are trying to make a difference in veterans' lives.

Judy "Velcro" Lacey

*Freedom is never free. It is paid for with the blood of the brave. It is paid for with the tears of their loved ones. It is up to us to preserve and defend that which they have paid so dearly for.*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

RFTW Riders,

Summer is behind us and autumn is upon us. Where did summer go? This one has been pretty hectic at our house, but that is a story for another time and place. Bottom line is that I have been unable to get my bike out of the garage since the Run. Luckily we live in a section of the country that offers a riding season that is a full 12 months long. Hopefully in the next couple of weeks, I will be back on two wheels as much as I can.

I do hope that all of our riders have taken advantage of any good weather that has come their way these past 4 months. For some folks the weather may turn particularly nasty soon. Deep freeze is expected this winter in the north central part of the country and more snow than normal in the Northeast. So, get your riding in while you can. Why am I focusing on riding as much as possible while we can? Well, I had the misfortune of breaking my ankle in a motorcycle accident in late May. I attribute the incident to a couple of causes, which I will share with you. In each case I knew at the time that I was flirting with danger. First, I purchased a new Ultra Limited in September of '15 and really didn't take the time necessary to get comfortable on my new ride. I changed employers in November of that year and spent several months coming up to speed with my new job and work environment. I did put a couple of thousand miles on the bike, but in no way did I attempt to simulate the rigor of the Run. Big mistake—I knew by the time we got to Needles that I wished I had my “old friend” under me. I should have taken the time to really get to know the new bike and how it handled. Second, as I prepared for the Run, I was still in the throes of gearing up for the new job. It was necessary for me to remain almost totally focused on my work up to and including the afternoon before we left Ontario. I was staying at the Radisson, but commuting to and from downtown Los Angeles during the time that I should have been focusing on the ride ahead and the challenges that I would be facing. I explained the situation to my VP, but my participation in the meetings on those two days was absolutely necessary and unavoidable. As a result I had no time to decompress from the intensive work sessions before heading out. My head wasn't really in the game. I had a bad feeling and instead of heeding it, I just brushed it off and plowed on. I should have just taken the first day or two to ride ahead of the Run and get my head in the game at my own speed. Should a similar situation arise in the future I will absolutely retire. I probably should do that anyway! So – that was my “Safety Moment” as we call it in my line of work. I need to practice what I preach and not think that the principles apply to everyone but me.



We are all vulnerable, and none of us are immortal: a fact that becomes increasingly apparent each passing year. Most of us who served in Vietnam are beginning to show our age. We need to keep that in mind. So, what has the Board of Directors been up to this past summer?

Well, in case you missed it, we have developed a new and improved website. A totally new look that is more “user friendly” and technologically efficient. This task started over a year ago with past BOD member Harlan Olson taking the lead and finally came to fruition with the assistance of Kirk Olson and several other Board Members. It seems to be running pretty smoothly at this point. The Forum Module is active and I believe that the store is on line and I know that the Registration Module is up and running. At the moment we encourage all to use this site as the old one will eventually fade into oblivion. One of the things that you will see coming on the new site is a link to our SOPs and Operational Guidelines. These

documents are currently under review by the Board and are being updated for posting. Now, we fully understand that we will undoubtedly be inundated with emails and comments and the Forum will probably go crazy after we post them (and they will not all be posted at once, but rather as they become available). We expect this and know that there will probably be several number items with which folks may take issue. Please let us know and we will consider your comments, but be advised that these documents are the result of years of input and revision and are modified almost every year to reflect current thinking in response to events as well as rider input by way of After Action Reports. Changes are not taken lightly, nor are they implemented without total board approval, which includes representatives of all routes. The challenges notwithstanding, the BOD feels that all riders should have access to the written procedures that we use in an attempt to keep the Run as safe and efficient as possible. These are the standards as we apply them and all riders are expected to accept them as such when they sign up for the Run. You are encouraged to review them as they become available. In the future all persons holding leadership position will be required to be familiar with those parts that apply to their specific position.

In the last newsletter I made mention that following the floods this past summer, RFTW has worked in relief efforts of one of our most supportive communities, Rainelle, WV. I also need to make mention of a program initiated by one of our riders, Jenny Ward, to further that effort by securing funds to provide winter coats for the children of Rainelle. Even had the flooding not taken place, many of these less fortunate kids would be hard pressed to own a truly warm winter coat in the coal mining town deep in the mountains of West Virginia. Thank you, Jenny.

I would also like to, again, draw your attention to the fact that we host a benevolence fund to provide assistance to organizations that further our mission. You will soon be seeing information on the new website as to how an organization can apply for these funds. Also, in parallel to this funding is what used to be known as a “Run For Them All” fund to provide some assistance to riders who have a strong desire or need to participate in the Run, but do not have the funds to do so. This program was developed to help those younger riders recently returning from deployment or separated from the service and wish to join us in our healing opportunity. Once again, I need to thank each and every one of the hundreds of riders who step up to leadership positions in our “organization”. I put that in quotes because our operational organization only lasts for a few weeks while we are on the Run. Our Route Coordinators and senior staff, to include the State Coordinators, do work year round, but the bulk of the folks go to work in Ontario.

AND, of course the thousands of people who turn out to “Welcome us Home,” coast to coast deserve our most sincere thanks. We certainly couldn’t make this journey without them.

Thank You for the opportunity to serve again,

God Bless the USA, God Bless RFTW and GOD BLESS THOSE WHO SUPPORT OUR MISSION!

BE SAFE and Honor All Who Serve,  
“Attitude”

---

## ► FNG STORIES

### A 21-YEAR WAIT

By John & Joyce Vaughn, Iowa

My story has to start back in 1995, when I bought my 1985 Honda Goldwing. Shortly after that purchase I heard about Run For The Wall. RFTW was about 7 years old and I thought, now that's something I think I would like to do. Well I would have to put it off for a while, as I was a police officer and unable to get that much time off to go. Then in 2003 I had to part with my Goldwing for medical reasons. I thought I would have to forget about going on RFTW. Well in 2014 after encouragement from my wife Joyce, we bought a Can Am Spyder and started talking about RFTW again.

In 2015 we both were working and unable to go, and then 2016 we both were retiring and decided to take the last three days of school off, as we worked for the school district. We didn't have the time to go to Ontario, so we joined up with the central group in Wentzville, MO. Now we decided in January and that gave me plenty of time to get everything set up to go—hotel reservations, make sure the bike was ready. To help prepare me for the trip, I started watching youtube videos. The more videos I watched the more enthused I got. I could not wait for May 23 to come so we could head for Wentzville.

Finally that day came and we headed out. It was somewhat of a rocky start, had a time finding the registration team, but once we found them it just seemed to jump off. Now I am a retired Marine and retired police officer, and I know from watching all the videos that this is a time of healing. I was not a combat vet, I was in tanks and by the time I got to Vietnam it was on a ship and all we did was float off the coast for three months. I have always felt bad in a way because I was not in-country or in combat. I have to say that I sure as hell saw more combat, in a sense, while I was a police officer.

I will have to say that the people in the Central group, 10 platoons to be exact, helped me to lose that feeling. Special thanks especially to Terry, one of the tailgunners—Joyce and I were overwhelmed by the outpouring of support by everybody along the way.

When I came back in 1971 there was no support from anyone, and only some here and there up until I retired in 1988. I did not start seeing the country start changing until 1991, when in February I was called out of retirement for Operation Desert Storm. I was sent to Camp Lejuene, NC, and when I was driving to Lejuene I noticed all the yellow ribbons around trees and telephone poles and hanging off buildings. I have to say that this touched me. And after being on RFTW, I have been thoroughly touched, Joyce also.

I have basically been riding motorcycles for over 40 years, and I consider myself an experienced rider. I believe that the four days from Wentzville to DC was the longest motorcycle safety course I have ever had. And I do believe that after that, I am now a lot better rider than I thought I was.

The only bad thing about RFTW is that it ends too soon. We were only with it for four days, and now we have to wait until next year. And we are going next year, from Ontario to DC, all the way. I can't wait. I cannot explain the feeling that I have of the people in RFTW—they are outstanding. It's hard to explain to people around home what we experienced for them to understand. Some do, but most don't.

One thing I noticed was in our group and I imagine it's the same in all groups: you cannot tell who is not a veteran. All those who did not serve, are in my book no different. I am proud to have ridden with

everybody—it was one of the greatest experiences of my life, and I can't wait til next year. See all of you on Central Route then.

## **OH, THOSE ALLERGIES!**

By Edwin Musto, New Zealand

Cpl, South African Defence Force - 1980-1982

1 Maintenance Unit

Quarter Master General Head Quarters

It has been a while since I have returned to New Zealand and have been wanting to write about my experience as an FNG on the 2016 RFTW. I seem to battle to put it into words without having a terrible allergy attack (read *tears!*).

Well I planned and dreamed for five years to attend RFTW and ride in honor of Richard Frank Musto who was shot in Vietnam. None the wiser did I realise that the run is so HUGE!!!! And the fact that it is more than just riding in memory of a soldier who was shot or a POW or MIA. No, it is way more than I ever could imagine.

Before going to RFTW I thought I had it all together and would cope with all the emotion, the people and of course the dreaded allergy. But reading every article and watching every YouTube video I could find about RFTW was not giving me the real picture.

RFTW is greater than all of that—it is the experience, the people, the emotion, the places we see and visit to honor our brothers and sisters. It is the HUGS, it is the ride, it is the meals, it is the citations that are read. It is the people, it is the special ceremonies, it is the goal, and most importantly it is the MISSION!! Remember we ride 3 routes but we have one MISSION!

I arrived in Ontario, CA as a stranger, only having spoken to a few folks via the forum and riding with my long-standing USA brother from another mother Kevin aka Speedbump. I remember hardly getting off the bike and walking into the hotel to check in and getting hugs from total strangers in line to check in. I remember being welcomed home, being welcomed like the son returning home to a family with so much love to give, a son returning home to a family that understands and a family that I can and will never forget.

Oh this darn allergy when I am typing!!!!

Then Wednesday arrives—an early start with so many more emotions. Have I done the right thing to come halfway around the world and ride with people I don't know, with people who have been in places I have not been mentally and physically?! Do I fit in? However, with all the emotions the time draws near and we roll out on the 10-day MISSION to DC. I find it hard to settle into the ride as my emotions run wildly with the allergy attacks I have on the road as my mind thinks of the lost brothers and sisters, MIAs and KIAs—those who never made it home. I cry like a baby, but I know I have a MISSION to do.

It takes time to settle into the ride with the style of riding with RFTW. However, I slowly start getting comfortable with the ride.

Come the first fuel stop and I am just blown away. I had seen the video, but experiencing the way RFTW refuels all these bikes is just awesome. Thanks to all on the fuel team—you guys rock. This is a system that has been tried and tested I am sure over the 28 years of RFTW and if you have never experienced a RFTW

fuel stop, you will be blown away. I call it a type of controlled chaos that works and so quickly all the bikes are staged and soon ready to roll again down the highway.

At all the stops you are meeting with someone you have not met with or spoken to before. This brother and sisterhood is an experience like no other I have ever experienced. I met so many people and oh I so wish I could remember each and every name / road name.

The special stops we have on RFTW are really special. I must say the stop at Gallup where we were treated to the Navajo Nation and the Gourde Dancers dancing is an experience that will live with me forever. An experience that is only given to RFTW members when they visit. I still hear and feel the drum beats in my mind when I think of it.

Along the way many ceremonies are held and RFTW members are fed and taken care of like kings and queens. Across the beautiful heartland of America I was thanked for my service and was welcomed home—I felt this to be an honor, even though I did serve in an Army—not in the USA but in South Africa. No one in South Africa ever, ever thanked me for my service when I returned home in 1982 after serving for two years. The first person ever to thank me for my service was an 11 year old school boy from Spiller Elementary School in Wytheville USA through the pen pal program on this forum. Thank you Michael.

Well, I was enjoying the Run until that dreaded Monday morning outside Topeka Kansas. Yes, you guessed it—I and four other bikes on the run were involved in an accident. I felt my world was coming to an end as I thought my RFTW trip was over. Well, Kevin and I rested up in Topeka and our bikes were taken back to Phoenix AZ. We were both in a lot of pain and all I wanted to do was get a flight out of the USA and come back home. However, on the Wednesday morning when I woke up, Kevin had come up with a plan. Yes, we were to rent a car and catch up with RFTW and go to DC. I was really not wanting to do this, but through his encouragement I decided yes, we will do it. That afternoon we headed out of Topeka and the goal was to catch up by Thursday when the pack rode into Rainelle.

Sure enough, with about 40 minutes to spare, we arrived in Rainelle to join RFTW and see the bikes roll in. Yes, Rainelle was all and more than what I had read about. It was awesome to hand out pens to the children and sign their books—I felt so important! I now understand why Rainelle is so important to Central Route. It was also at Rainelle where Platoon 9 gave me my road name—THUMB, because it is my thumb that was injured in the accident. (I am currently as I write this still nursing my thumb after having surgery on it four weeks ago.)

On we went and arrived in DC on Friday. I also at this stage thought that I would not get to go into Arlington and pay my respects at the Wall. However, the Missing Man Coordinator, Tom Pogue, aka Bones, had it all planned. He approached me and I was informed that I was going to be a pillion on a bike into Arlington! (oh, the allergy again as I type). Well, I could not believe that this honor was to be given to me—MISSING MAN FORMATION and into the hallowed grounds of Arlington!! Never in my wildest dreams did I ever even think that this honor would be given to me. I was honored and even more honored by the man on whose trike I was pillion on—“Oscar,” I thank you. Going to Arlington was a lifetime dream of mine to visit even before I learned of RFTW and I am so honored that I could go.

Well, this seemed to be the end of RFTW 2016. I returned to the hotel and said my goodbyes as at this stage I wanted to carry on with my planned but shortened holiday and needed time to reflect and be on my own. As they say, RFTW is not your Sunday breakfast run! It is a run like no other anywhere on the planet. It was sad saying my goodbyes to folks I had met and already over the 10 days built up a relationship with.



In closing, I want to say that RFTW has changed my life and given me a new reason to live life to the full. Also that I will be returning in 2017 to go all the way again and this time with my wife Janet as an FNG. I have met the most amazing people who I can now call brother and sister and who are there at the other end of the phone when I call them from the bottom of the world. RFTW needs to continue and the message needs to be spread that the MISSION will carry on until we bring them all home.

Thank you to the RFTW BOD and the Leadership of Central Route 2016 and the leaders of Platoon 9 and all the folks I met on this journey for the love and friendship and for allowing this guy from Africa now living in New Zealand to be made so welcome and allowing me to be part of this great family and organization known as RUN FOR THE WALL. It was supposed to be a one-off mission for me, but our plane tickets are on my desk and we have registered for 2017. See you all soon! IS IT MAY YET?

PS – I am NOT a great writer but these are just some of my thoughts. I find it very difficult to write as I am such a HUGE ALLERGY sufferer!

---

## ► OTHER STORIES

### VIETNAM VET RECEIVES MEDAL OF HONOR

"Of all the details of this mission on the table, saving the 44 men is the only thing that matters," said retired Army Lt. Col. Charles Kettles, the most recent recipient of the Medal of Honor. Kettles was inducted into the Pentagon's "Hall of Heroes," on July 19, 2016. During the induction ceremony, Kettles was joined by several hundred others, including Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter, Secretary of the Army Eric Fanning, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Daniel B. Allyn and Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey.



Nearly 50 years ago, on May 15, 1967, Kettles led a team of helicopters into the jungles of Vietnam under heavy enemy fire to rescue Soldiers from an enemy engagement where they had been severely overmatched by enemy combatants. Later that day, just when everyone expected that the rescue operations were over, they learned that eight more Soldiers remained behind. "Charles didn't hesitate, he immediately broke off, passed flight lead to another aircraft, and returned for a fourth landing into that landing zone, to bring everybody home,"

recounted Allyn.

"Kettles once again vanquished his fears, bouncing several hundred feet into that landing zone. There, the enemy was able to concentrate its efforts on Kettle's single aircraft. Smoke billowed inside, the aircraft lurched from left to right, but somehow, some way, he was able to fly it, coax it, will it out of that landing zone. Lt. Col. Kettles demonstrated his commitment and deep-seated loyalty to all those men, and our entire nation, by his actions that day. He did not quit. He refused to leave any Soldier behind," Allyn said.



In all, the total rescue operations involved some 74 helicopter crewmembers who ended up saving the lives of 44 Soldiers. "It is fitting that we acknowledge and share the honor with the 74 helicopter crewmembers who were involved in the total mission on that date," Kettles said. "It belongs to them, who, with their deep regard for their fellow Soldiers, minimized the losses that day." A plaque bearing Kettles name will soon join those of other Medal of Honor recipients that line the walls of the Hall of Heroes, commemorating his having received the Medal of Honor for his action back in Vietnam. But across the river, in Washington, D.C., there is another wall with some 58,000 names engraved on it. "Every name represents great loss for a family and our nation," Carter said. The names of the 44 men Kettles was credited with helping save are not on that wall, however, because he fearlessly led the team that ensured those men got home from battle that day, Carter said. "How many Thanksgiving tables have had an extra chair through the years because of his actions?" Carter asked. "How many weddings, childbirths and graduations were made possible because Maj. Kettles and his crew returned again and again to the hot landing zone in the Song Tra Cau riverbed?"

Nobody but Kettles knows exactly what he was thinking that day in Vietnam or what he expected to happen exactly, Carter said. But Carter believes he knows what motivated Kettles. It's the same thing that motivates all good Soldiers. "Duty, honor, country and the deeply held conviction that we will never leave a soldier, sailor, airman or marine behind," Carter said. "For many American service members in harm's way, the first indication they would see their family again was the sound of helicopter blades beating against the sky. Without the valor of the helicopter pilots in Vietnam, countless additional names would have been added to the wall across the river." Today, Carter reminded his audience, military pilots still undertake that same mission over Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

In his remarks, Fanning said he and Kettles share a kinship of sorts, being that the two are both Michigan natives. He said that as a "Michigander," and with the heart of America's auto industry nearby in Detroit, "chances are you spent some time with machines. For Chuck Kettles, that meant a love affair with engines and aviation from the very start of his life, from his education at Edison Institute in Dearborn, where he practiced on the flight simulator, to his work with cars and engines at his Ford dealership, we see some of what prepared him to be an Army aviator," Fanning said. "The Huey that Chuck flew was a pioneering machine at the time, but he knew instinctively how to get the most out of it. While the deeds we honor today are the product of great courage and valor, they have their roots in what he learned growing up in Michigan." While Kettles had trained to fly early in life as a "Citizen Soldier," it wasn't training alone that accounted for his heroic achievements in Vietnam, Fanning said. "Our admiration for Lt. Col. Kettles comes from his acts of heroism, but also from his quiet professionalism -- from how, on the day of his greatest testing, just with all other days, he embodied the Army values: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage."

Kettles remained humble after the plaque bearing his name and the names of other Medal of Honor recipients was revealed. The Hall of Heroes contains more than a dozen plaques, bearing the names of more than 3,400 Medal of Honor recipients from all services, grouped by conflict. Kettles knows personally at least two of those recipients, including Master Sgt. Raul Perez "Roy" Benavidez and Maj. William E. Adams, both of whom earned the honor for their own actions in Vietnam. He said that while the Medal of Honor he wears around his neck can be worn by just one person, it represents the heroic actions of all the soldiers involved in the operation that day in May 1967, in Vietnam.

Some of those men had been with Kettles at the White House, the day before, when President Barack Obama placed the medal around his neck. At the Hall of Heroes induction ceremony in the Pentagon were two of Kettles' battle buddies, Don Long and Ron Roy. "Between lifts into the landing zone, (they) brought

ammunition in for resupply," Kettles said of the two men. "One such trip they took a mortar round on the mast of the helicopter." The two had to exit the helicopter as a result of the damage. Long was injured. They joined up with the infantry. "There were forty infantrymen, and four crew members with .38s. We didn't add a lot to the firepower. We were kind of in their way at times. We had a great leader who got things done," said Roy of their experience being with the infantry that day. "To go borrow aircraft from another company, after all yours got shot down, that takes a lot of guts. And guts in the other unit too, pilots that came back in with Lt. Col. Kettles to come get us. Everybody knew what they were flying into. There was no question. It was not going to be pleasant."

John Osborne, who was crew chief on the helicopter that Kettles flew into the landing zone for that last mission, also attended the induction ceremony at the Pentagon with Kettles and his battle buddies. "During that mission he took a shrapnel round in the knee," Kettles said of Osborne. "He refused to accept a Purple Heart -- he regarded as nothing." "At one point I was scared to death," Osborne remembered. "I regained a little bit of composure, and we had set back down. That's when we really took the heat. But thank God we were able to get these people out. This man saved all of our lives. He got us out under adverse conditions."

Of Matt McGuire, a gunship leader, Kettles recalled, "in spite of the damage to each of his helicopters, Matt was always there. On that final extraction, there was only one aircraft for everybody to focus on and shoot at," McGuire said of Kettle's helicopter on the last run. McGuire attended the Pentagon ceremony too, and was present at the White House to see Kettles receive his medal. "And the courage and the valor and commitment to the mission, saving those souls...is truly more than deserving of the Medal of Honor," he said, "because you were going into a really bad area. There wasn't much predictability of success. You believed in your skill, you believed in your crew, and that's what made a difference. That's why I am proud to be part of the brotherhood of aviation."

Roland Scheck, Kettle's door gunner, was also at the ceremony. Kettles said Scheck came to him from Germany, by way of Canada, though they met at Fort Benning, Georgia. "Roland Scheck ... he was my door gunner, he had been from day one at Fort Benning," Kettles said. Scheck was a German national who had gone to Canada to join the militia, expecting to be able to go to Vietnam. But when he learned that the Canadians were not going to Vietnam, he traveled to the U.S., to Detroit, Michigan, to join the Army. "I had the good fortune of having him for my gunner," Kettles said. Scheck said he was grateful to have Kettles too. Kettles saved his life. "I want to thank him and all my brothers for what they did for me that day," Scheck said. "He didn't have to come back to get me. I was the first guy he had to haul away. He's been my hero ever since that day. And I'm sorry I couldn't stay for the rest of the day."

Also at the Pentagon was Dewey Smith, one of the last eight rescued on Kettles' last run. Richard Ammons, also one of the eight, had wanted to attend but was unable to make it due to medical reasons, according to Kettles. "I was with the 101st Airborne," Smith remembered. "I was on the ground. I was one of the eight men that were picked up last. It was extremely heart dropping when the flight took off. Those of us in the rear guard, back in the brush, they didn't see us. They took off. But when I saw the one helicopter coming in, that made the day," he continued. "And it was unbelievable that he was able to bring it in considering the amount of fire it was receiving. I have nothing but gratitude for the man and his crew, and for all the helicopter pilots that day. They all did a good job bringing in resupplies, taking out our wounded, bringing us in new guys. It was amazing."

In the conclusion of his remarks, Kettles demonstrated the same patriotism and commitment to the nation he showed long ago in Vietnam. "I have a deep sense of gratitude for the opportunities that each person is afforded by this nation," he said. "I also believe that there is no price for anyone to pay that contributes to

the preservation of our great nation. I have faith in each generation that has come along and will in the future."

[Source: Army News Service | C. Todd Lopez | July 19, 2016 ++]

## ONE MEMBER OF DOOLITTLE RAIDERS REMAINS

As of Sept 30, 2016, 101-year-old Richard Cole is the last remaining member of the famed Doolittle Raiders of WWII.

On April 18, 1942, about four months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, 80 airmen in 16 B-25B Mitchell bombers lifted off from the aircraft carrier USS Hornet in the northwest Pacific bound for targets in Japan. Lt. Col. James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle, the famed air racer, test pilot and aeronautical engineer, was chosen to plan the daring mission. Doolittle piloted the lead plane from Hornet. His co-pilot was 26-year-old Lieutenant Richard E. Cole. Neither Doolittle nor any of his men had flown a single combat mission. Doolittle's aircraft was the first to take off, and Doolittle and Cole dropped incendiary bombs to mark targets for other bombers.



Doolittle's B-25's lined up on the USS Hornet

That the mission was ever completed was nothing short of a miracle. No one had ever before attempted to fly bombers off an aircraft carrier meant for small fighter planes. A typical B-25 takeoff uses about 2,000 feet of runway, but the Hornet's deck allowed the planes as little as 300 feet to get airborne — otherwise they'd drop off the edge and into the ocean. Incredibly, the mission pilots had been trained to be able to take off as slowly as 75 mph with as little as 250 feet of runway.

Adding to the problems faced by the Raiders was the fact that the raid was launched a day earlier than planned, after a Japanese vessel spotted the Hornet, and the distance to their targets grew to 645 miles, far more than the original plan of 400 miles. That meant the planes wouldn't have enough fuel to guarantee they'd land safely in China. They were told this—and they went anyway.



Doolittle's crew, from left: navigator Henry Hank Potter, pilot James Jimmy Doolittle, bombardier Fred Braemer, co-pilot Richard Dick Cole, engineer-gunner Paul Leonard

They bombed Tokyo and then flew as far as they could. Four planes crash-landed; 11 more crews bailed out, and three of the Raiders died. Eight more were captured; three were executed. Another died of starvation in a Japanese prison camp. One crew made it to Russia and was interned for 13 months before escaping through Iran.

Cole bailed out of his plane over China and reunited with Doolittle on the ground the next day after dangling from a tree by his parachute all night. He stayed in China and Burma, flying resupply missions over “The Hump” between India and China.

In April of this year, Cole toasted the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Doolittle mission at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolf, Texas.

Cole and the other Raiders were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, and on April 15, 2015, the remaining Raiders were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal.

When Jimmy Doolittle’s Medal of Honor was mentioned recently, Cole said, “Yes. He deserted a lot more.” Cole responded when asked his opinion of Doolittle as his commander, “The highest order of respect from one human being to another.”

## **DOJ TO GIVE MILLIONS FOR MORE VETERANS COURTS**

On September 20, the Justice Department pledged to support more outlets in the growing Veterans Treatment Court system, awarding more than \$4 million to 13 state and local jurisdictions to develop their own programs.

Awardees include: Kansas 10th Judicial District Court (\$314,494); the 14th Judicial District Attorney’s Office in Louisiana (\$350,000); Roseau County (\$305,501) and Anoka County (\$300,000), both in Minnesota; Miami-Dade County, Florida (\$350,000); City of Norfolk, Virginia, Community Service Board (\$300,000); the Judiciary Courts of the State of Montana (\$300,000); Missouri 22nd Judicial Circuit, St. Louis City Drug Court (\$300,000); the Riverside, California, County Probation Department (\$300,000) and the Superior Court of California, County of Solano (\$296,875); Denton County, Texas (\$299,732); La Crosse, Wisconsin, Area Veterans Court (\$300,000); and the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (\$300,000). An additional \$144,499 was provided to the National Institute of Corrections to supplement a project to develop, pilot and evaluate a risk assessment tool for justice-involved veterans.

There are about 463 VTCs in the U.S. and they are successful beyond everyone’s expectations. Offenders in normal courts have a 72% recidivism rate; drug treatment courts have a 25% rate; but Veterans Treatment Courts have a 10% recidivism rate.

## **CIVIL WAR VET CREMAINS TAKEN HOME**

Pvt. Jewett Williams, a Civil War soldier who fought with the 20th Maine Volunteer Infantry regiment, will never be forgotten again. This month, Williams’ remains were claimed after 94 years then transported across the country from Oregon to Maine by the Patriot Guard Riders, a volunteer motorcycle group with members from across the nation whose mission is to honor U.S. military Veterans both living and dead.

The Patriot Guard began its journey with Williams's remains on 1 AUG in Portland, Oregon. Members of the guard have traveled by motorcycle with Williams' remains roughly 3,500 miles, across 19 states with transfers at each state line. The escort made a stop at the Appomattox Court House National Historical Park in Virginia, where a ceremony was held in Williams' honor August 18. As part of the 20th Maine Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Williams was at Appomattox Court House for the end of the Civil War, as Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered to Gen. Ulysses Grant in a ceremony on April 12, 1865.

Over 100 motorcyclists participated in the segments of Williams' journey through Virginia alone. Riders from states that were not a part of the route, such as Florida, Georgia and South Carolina, traveled north to participate at Appomattox. "That's who we are. We are the patriots, we are the guard of our Veterans and we want to make sure to get them back home to their resting places," said Virginia Patriot Guard rider James Tennant, who carried Williams' remains during the ceremony at Appomattox. Tennant, a Navy Veteran and a ten-year member of the Patriot Guard Rider, described the ride as the highlight of his life. He said the Patriot Guard Riders have participated in numerous escorts. However, he acknowledged the history that was made during this particular mission. When discussing the receipt of Williams' remains for the leg of the mission that led to Appomattox, Tennant said, "that's a body, it's a person, a Veteran, a soldier... that touches my heart. To be able to put him on my motorcycle with my wife and ride here, it's an experience I can't describe. It's unbelievable."

Jewett Williams was born in 1843 in the small farming community of Hodgdon in northern Maine. He was drafted into the U.S. Army at Bangor, Maine, on Oct. 12, 1864. Williams served his last six months with the 20th Maine Infantry regiment fighting during the siege of Petersburg, Virginia, the Stony Creek (or "Applejack") Raid and other battles, such as Peebles Farm, Hatcher's Run, White Oak Road, Quaker Road, Five Forks and Appomattox. After the war, Williams returned home to Maine before living in several different states. Upon moving to Michigan, he and his wife had their first child, who died at 19 months. They then moved to Minnesota where they had five more children before settling in Washington and then Oregon in the 1890s. Up until about 1919, Williams frequently spoke to local school groups during Memorial Day events. His wife died in 1920.

Williams died in 1922, at the age of 78, after a three-month stay in the Oregon State Hospital for the Insane in Salem, Oregon. There, he was diagnosed with senility. His ashes were discovered in a copper can in 2004, shelved in a shed on the hospital's property alongside the remains of more than 3,600 other people. No one claimed Williams' remains until Maine historian Tom Desjardin, who was researching members of the 20th Maine stumbled across an online archive that housed Williams' record.

The effort to transport Williams to his final resting place in Maine was a joint effort coordinated by volunteers, including the historian who found him, the Patriot Guard Riders, the Maine Living History Association, with support from the Togus National Cemetery, the adjutant general of the Maine National Guard and the Oregon and Maine state departments of Veterans affairs. The Patriot Guard Riders delivered Williams' remains on August 22 to his surviving family members in Maine.

[Source: VAntage Point | August 22, 2016

---



## ► COMBAT HERO BIKE BUILD



Every year, beginning in 2013, RFTW participates in having an adaptive bike built for a combat-injured veteran. The bikes are customized specifically to accommodate the veteran's disabilities, so that they can once again enjoy the freedom of the road. The bikes are built in Southern Oregon by Thunderstruck Customs of Medford, Oregon.

EagleWarriors, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit corporation (EagleWarriors.org), is the parent organization for the Combat Hero Bike Build (CHBB), and RFTW assists in the motorcycle rebuilding efforts for the combat wounded recipients.

In 2017 RFTW will present custom motorcycles to not one but two injured combat vets.

### (1) Ken Kraft

Ken Kraft is a retired United States Army Captain and Multnomah County Senior Corrections Deputy Sheriff. Ken and his wife Brenda have been married for 20

years and Ken has three stepchildren and two children from his first marriage. Ken lives in Oregon City and has raised "Battle Buddy" Olde Victorian Bulldogs for injured combat veterans. Ken joined the Oregon Army National Guard in November 1987 as a Private First Class and served in progressive enlisted ranks until he applied for and was accepted to Officer Candidate School. Ken finished his time in the Oregon Army National guard as a successful Company Commander and made a career decision to transfer to the United States Army Reserve Where he served as the S3 Operations Officer with the 104<sup>th</sup> IT. Ken volunteered for service in Afghanistan or Iraq and was augmented into the 166<sup>th</sup> (ASG)



Area Support Group, which Served in Iraq October 2004 through October 2015. Ken was assigned to serve as XO/Operations Officer for Camp Slayer Iraq. Camp Slayer was the (ISG) Iraqi Survey Group, (DIA) Defense



Intelligence Agency and other Presidential appointments. Camp Slayer managed WMD, Mass Graves, Search for missing Gulf War Pilot Scott Speicher and other mission critical operations. Ken was injured in a mortar attack while inspecting a newly completed security project. Ken was awarded the Bronze Star for his service in Iraq and returned to Puerto Rico at the completion of his tour. In Puerto Rico he was with the 166<sup>th</sup> ASG and started medical tests, which determined that his back was damaged at L1 through S1 and both his knees were damaged beyond repair. Ken has an M-TBI and to date has completed



over 20 surgeries, which included two back surgeries and two total knee replacements. He is still undergoing multiple surgeries as he fights to save his left leg from amputation. He has spent years recovering and assisting other returning veterans with severe injuries. In 2012 he competed at the VA Summer Sports Clinic in San Diego and was Captain for the Championship team. Ken is a life member of the VFW, American Legion, DAV, MOAA, AMVETS and NRA as a way of assisting all veterans. Ken is a 3 time All American Post Commander. He currently serves as Oregon's membership director of an All American state and also serves as the National Military Services Director for Oregon, working closely with National Guard Reserve and Active Component Military Personnel and families throughout Oregon. He was the top Division 3 Commander in the VFW worldwide 2013-2014. In the fall of 2015 Ken lost his right leg, which was amputated above the knee and he started his rehab.



“It would be an amazing honor to be able to ride a trike on a portion or legs of the Ride for the Wall,” Ken said. “My military service to America is a great honor and privilege.”

## (2) CHRIS CLAUDE

Chris knew from childhood that he wanted to be in the military. He would visit his grandmother in Maryland and go to the nearby Army/Navy store to buy supplies so he could play in her backyard and pretend he was a Marine. He enlisted in the Marine Corps straight out of high school in 1998. His first duty station was with Headquarters Battery, 11<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, Counter



Battery  
Radar  
Platoon  
in

Camp Pendleton,  
California. During  
this time he served as  
a Radar Team Leader  
until selection for  
recruiting in 2002.





He then served as a canvassing recruiter in Visalia, California while attached to Recruiting Station Sacramento. During this secondary assignment he was promoted to Staff Sergeant meritoriously. Upon successful completion of recruiting duty in 2005, he was reassigned to 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 11<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment as the Assistant Battalion Operations Chief. He was then selected among his



peers to be a Military Advisor to Iraq Army Battalion 0841, in Karbala, Iraq. After the accident, he was promoted to Gunnery Sergeant and then retired from active service in 2007. Chris was injured on February 20, 2006 when the vehicle he and his team were traveling in was blown up by an IED. He was supposed to be driving, but switched spots with his buddy, Jay Collado at the last minute. Jay was killed on impact. Chris was rear gunner and as the vehicle careened off the road and flipped over into a ditch filled with dirty sewage water, he was caught up in his gear and the rest of his MiTT team had to pull him out of the wreckage. He was conscious the entire time. Once the doc pulled him out, he lay on the ground for about an hour and a half until being flown out to Baghdad Hospital. The doc held his femoral artery closed with clamps so Chris wouldn't bleed out. He took in tons of shrapnel, which is still in his body to this day, and occasionally surfaces and has to be picked out with tweezers. His hand was also burned and he had to undergo surgeries and now is missing his left thumb tip and his ring finger is deformed and "hooks." He also has a TBI and has a bad migraine at least once a month. After being transported from Baghdad to Germany, he went through 67 units of blood, died on the table one time and was brought back via defibrillator. At that point, his right leg was amputated above the knee. Once stabilized, he was then flown to Bethesda Naval Hospital where he was a few months and then underwent rehabilitation at Brooke Army Medical Center. Chris was awarded the Purple Heart, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Valor, two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, Iraqi Campaign Medal, two Marines Corps Good Conduct Medals, Global Warfare on Terrorism Service Medal, National Defense Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, Navy Unit Commendation, Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, Marine Corps Recruiting Service Ribbon. From that point on, his first marriage declined and ended in divorce, leaving him in financial ruin. His ex-wife had never worked and all of the bills, the house and the cars were his responsibility. Chris was ordered to pay \$1900 alimony and over \$3000 in child support per month.

But not long after this, Chris reconnected with his childhood friend, Shirley Anna. They dated and were married in 2011. They now have an 18 month old baby, Genevieve, who born eight years and one day after his "Alive Day."

*Footnote: John "Hardcharger" Barker of the Combat Bike Build team sent the following info he thought would be of interest to everyone: "Every year we get the bike built in Southern Oregon and we get a lot of support here, but the fine folks that help so much don't get to see the finished product. So this year we decided to have this year's Bike Build recipient, Shaun Meadows, and the bike at the annual Bike show that the builder, Thunderstruck Customs of Medford, puts on. So getting Shaun here is no problem, but the bike, that was a different story. Finally a couple of brothers from RFTW stepped up and another RFTW rider from TN jumped in to help. Dusty and Gary Hanson, of CA, responded to my request for help and said they would go get it. Then Charlie Fox of TN got hold of me and he donated his trailer so that the brothers wouldn't have to haul it both ways. He then went to Shaun's home, picked up the bike, and met the Hanson brothers at the Mississippi, where he handed off his trailer with Shaun's bike. They then delivered it to Medford, OR. Then Dusty Hanson and his wife Susie came up to the show; after the show they loaded up the bike and reversed the trip. I got a call from Charlie this morning that "Mission Accomplished." Now, that is RFTW at its best. We need more like them, Also, from St. Louis, MO Terry Sharp, another RFTW rider, has now joined the Bike Build team and will be looking for donations. I love it when it all works out!*

## **FREEDOM TO RIDE: CAPT. KEN KRAFT CHOSEN FOR 2017 COMBAT HERO BIKE BUILD**

August 30, 2016 by Bryan Harley in American Iron Magazine

They gathered to honor one of their own, patches and rockers on weathered leather vests telling their tales of service to our country. The greeting party gathered at Valley of the Rogue State Park in southern Oregon, a cross-section of American veterans from local motorcycle clubs including members of the Old Guard Riders, Combat Vets Association, others donning POW-MIA and Run for the Wall patches. The group greeted retired Army Capt. Ken Kraft with firm handshakes, hugs and smiles. Kraft was injured in a mortar attack at Camp Slayer in Baghdad, Iraq, in 2005. As a result, he has had over 40 surgeries on his right leg before finally losing it in 2015. But he hasn't let a prosthetic leg slow him down. In his quest to support other military members, Kraft founded the Lake Oswego VFW Post 12140. He's also about to get his first taste of riding a customized trike as the recipient of the 2017 Combat Hero Bike Build. The Combat Hero Bike Build is spearheaded by Eagles Up! [sic – Eagle Warriors] a non-profit whose mission is to "support and assist our military personnel." One of the ways it does that is by having a motorcycle tailor-made for a wounded warrior. Kraft had made the trip down from Oregon City to talk over design ideas and get fitted for his new trike with the team at ThunderStruck Custom Bikes out of Medford, Oregon, who will be converting a 2011 Road Glide Ultra into a trike for him. But not before meeting up with a welcoming party along the way who would escort him from the park to the shop. "I'm just blown away. I think it's amazing," said Kraft. This is the fourth time ThunderStruck has teamed up with Eagles Up! [sic – Eagle Warriors] for the Combat Hero Bike Build. Last year ThunderStruck turned a 2005 Dyna Low Rider into a hot rod trike for bilateral above knee amputee Air Force Staff Sgt. Shaun Meadows. For that build, ThunderStruck moved all functions to the bars so Meadows could control everything with his hands, outfitting the trike with a Pingel Electric Speed Shifter and a Kliktronics K-Lever 2, a system that puts hand levers for both brakes on the same control housing.





*ThunderStruck's Travis Linebaugh (L) and Mark Daley (R) are the talented duo who will make one mean machine for Combat Hero Bike Build recipient Ken Kraft (Center).*

While visiting ThunderStruck, Kraft bounced ideas off painter Jason Titus, images of Black Hawk helicopters and the toppling of Saddam's statue entering the conversation. He then hopped onboard the 2011 Road Glide Ultra so that ThunderStruck's Mark Daley and Travis Linebaugh could get a feel for placement of the controls, the seat, and ergonomics. Kraft has never ridden before but is excited about learning to ride and the freedom he's heard that comes along with it.

---

## ► VA NEWS

### THE FASTEST WAY TO GET A DISABILITY CLAIM DECISION

If you're a Veteran who needs to file a disability compensation claim for the first time or you need to submit a new claim for a previous service-related condition, there is now a faster, easier way to get a claim decision. With the help of your local Veterans Service Officer, you can file an electronic claim, or eClaim, through eBenefits and get a faster VA decision. Veterans now have the ability to start and submit claims online through the VA/DoD eBenefits web portal. All you need is a free Level 2 Premium eBenefits account to start your eClaim today! An eClaim removes all of the paper clutter connected with filing a traditional paper claim. You can submit your information online into VA's claims processing system. This allows VA to more quickly process your information and make a faster claim decision. For an even faster disability compensation claim decision, Veterans can also choose to file an electronic Fully Developed Claim (FDC) through eBenefits. In order to file an electronic FDC you must simultaneously provide all required documentation, submit an electronic claim through eBenefits, AND certify that you have met all program requirements. Providing all your documentation up front accelerates the claim decision process. Failure to provide required documentation in a timely manner, missing scheduled VA medical appointments, and/or submitting additional documentation after the initial submission can result in ineligibility. If you are determined ineligible for the FDC program, your claim will be processed through the traditional route. You can learn more about the FDC program and how to file an eClaim at [www.benefits.va.gov/fdc](http://www.benefits.va.gov/fdc), or visit the VBA Media and Publications Page at [www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/media-publications.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/media-publications.asp) to view informative videos on these topics. Contact a Veterans Service Officer for help filing an eClaim or electronic FDC, or visit [www.ebenefits.va.gov](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov) and

follow the guided step-by-step process. Agents at VA's toll-free number, 1-800-827-1000, can also answer any questions you may have. Don't get stuck waiting for a claim decision longer than you have to—take control of your claim and file an eClaim today!

<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/publications/agent-orange/agent-orange-summer-2016/disability-claim.asp>

## **VA TO PROVIDE PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTION**

The VA has published proposed regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases affecting military members exposed to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, N.C. The presumptive illnesses apply to active duty, reserve and National Guard members who served for no less than 30 days at Camp Lejeune between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987, and are diagnosed with the following conditions: adult leukemia aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes bladder cancer kidney cancer liver cancer multiple myeloma non-Hodgkin's lymphoma Parkinson's disease

“We have a responsibility to take care of those who have served our Nation and have been exposed to harm as a result of that service,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. “Establishing a presumption for service at Camp Lejeune will make it easier for those Veterans to receive the care and benefits they deserve.”

Environmental health experts on VA's Technical Workgroup conducted comprehensive reviews of scientific evidence, which included analysis and research done by the Department of Health and Human Service's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), Environmental Protection Agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the National Toxicology Program, and the National Academies of Science. Military members with records of service showing no less than 30 days of service, either concurrent or cumulative, at Camp Lejeune during the contamination period can already be granted Veteran status for medical benefits, following passage of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012.

In the early 1980s, volatile organic compounds, trichloroethylene (TCE), a metal degreaser, and perchloroethylene, a dry cleaning agent (PCE), as well as benzene, and vinyl chloride were discovered in two on-base water supply systems at Camp Lejeune. These systems served the housing, administrative, and recreational facilities, as well as the base hospital. The contaminated wells supplying the water systems were shut down in February 1985. VA acknowledges that current science establishes a link between exposure to certain chemicals found in the water supply at Camp Lejeune and later development of one of the proposed presumptive conditions. However, VA experts agree that there is no scientific underpinning to support a specific minimum exposure level for any of the conditions. Therefore, VA welcomes comments on the 30-day minimum exposure requirement and will consider other practical alternatives when drafting the final rule. VA also notes that the proposed 30-day requirement serves to establish eligibility for service connection on a presumptive basis; nothing in this proposed regulation prohibits consideration of service connection on a non-presumptive basis. The 30-day public comment period on the proposed rule is open until Oct.10, 2016.

## **DO PTSD VETS DESERVE A PURPLE HEART?**

Over the last decade, a controversial question has surrounded the Purple Heart: do veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder deserve it? The Pentagon currently does not award Purple Hearts to veterans suffering from PTSD. Supporters of this policy argue physical wounds have always determined eligibility for the Purple Heart. Some believe the science regarding PTSD is too primitive; indeed symptoms can be difficult to diagnose, and objective tests remain elusive. There are concerns that some veterans might attempt to fake the diagnosis. But critics say that denying Purple Hearts to these veterans reinforces the stigmatization of mental illness—in other words, that conditions of the mind are less real than conditions of the body. Nathaniel P. Morris a resident physician in psychiatry at the Stanford University School of Medicine, who has worked with veterans suffering from PTSD, can tell you the manifestations of this condition are very real. Symptoms can include flashbacks, paralyzing anxiety, hypervigilance, and self-harm.

Whether veterans with PTSD receive the Purple Heart has the potential to shape both the policies and the perceptions surrounding mental health in this country. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, PTSD afflicts up to one in five veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan in a given year, and as many as one in three veterans from earlier conflicts like Vietnam during their lifetime. As of 2013, roughly 400,000 veterans affiliated with the VA carried this diagnosis. These figures suggest psychological trauma is a staggering, but often unrecognized, burden on our troops. To propel this reform, a growing number of supporters seek to change the name to “post-traumatic stress injury.” After all, advocates say, PTSD stems from exposure to external trauma, much like any physical injury. Many veterans internalize the term “disorder” as being shameful, hiding the diagnosis from colleagues, family, and friends. As a result, these brave soldiers often don’t get the care they need and suffer alone. This debate drew national attention in 2008 when Secretary of Defense Robert Gates vowed to look into the matter. The proposal attracted a wide range of opponents, including veterans groups and the New York Times editorial board. In 2009, the Department of Defense announced it would not award Purple Hearts for the condition, citing many of the above concerns. But a great deal has changed in the near-decade since that ruling. We now know more about PTSD than ever before.

New findings suggest PTSD may stem from physical damage to the brain, much like chronic traumatic encephalopathy in the National Football League. Researchers have novel insights into the role that blast waves and traumatic brain injury play in its development. Suicide among veterans has become a national crisis, and we’ve learned those with PTSD have markedly increased risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors. The ranks of those supporting Purple Hearts for PTSD has swelled, including public endorsements from the National Alliance on Mental Illness, mental health experts, and outspoken veterans. In fact, during 2011, branches of the military expanded Purple Heart eligibility for those who sustained concussions or mild traumatic brain injuries; but again, PTSD was left aside. Some argue veterans with psychological conditions should receive a separate award. In 2009, a former Marine captain proposed the creation of a “Black Heart” medal for those suffering from PTSD. This might be a step forward, as veterans with PTSD would receive some degree of recognition. Still, separating physical injuries from psychological ones perpetuates the notion that conditions of body and mind are unequal. The Purple Heart is a precious award that should not be taken lightly. Handing out this medal to anyone with mild anxiety, depression, or sleeplessness could undermine its inherent value. But that doesn’t mean we should ignore the mental toll of war. In 1943, Lieutenant General George S. Patton Jr. famously slapped shell-shocked soldiers during the invasion of Sicily, disgusted by their “cowardice.” Nearly 75 years later, we’ve made huge strides in our understanding behind the neuroscience and the implications of these psychological injuries; yet more can still be done to acknowledge the wounds these warriors bear.

[Source: The Washington Post | Nathaniel P. Morris | July 22, 2016 ++]



## VA GRAVE MARKER MEDALLION

A Grave Marker Medallion, for veterans who died on or after November 1, 1990, is furnished upon receipt of claim for affixing to an existing privately-purchased headstone or marker placed at the gravesite of an eligible deceased Veteran who is buried in a private cemetery. The medallion is made of bronze and available in three sizes: Large, Medium, and Small. Each medallion is inscribed with the word VETERAN across the top and the Branch of Service at the bottom.. Eligible Veterans may receive a Government furnished headstone or marker, or a medallion, but not both. If requesting a headstone or marker, use the VA Form 40-1330. Large Medallion Dimensions: 6 3/8" W, 4 3/4" H, 1/2" D Medium Medallion Dimensions: 3 3/4" W, 2 7/8" H, 1/4" D Small Medallion Dimensions: 2" W, 1 1/2" H, 1/3" D



**Eligibility:** Any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who dies on active duty and is buried in a private cemetery in a grave marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. Any deceased Veteran discharged under honorable conditions, who died on or after November 1, 1990, and is buried in a private cemetery in a grave marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker. A deceased Veteran discharged under conditions other than honorable, who died on or after November 1, 1990, and is buried in a private cemetery in a grave marked with a privately purchased headstone or marker, may also be eligible. A copy of the deceased Veteran's discharge certificate (DD Form 214 or equivalent) or a copy of other official document(s) establishing qualifying military service must be attached. Do not send original documents; they will not be returned. Service after September 7, 1980, must be for a minimum of 24 months continuous active duty or be completed under special circumstances, e.g., death on active duty. Persons who have only limited active duty service for training while in the National Guard or Reserves are not eligible unless there are special circumstances, e.g., death while on active duty, or as a result of training. Reservists and National Guard members who, at time of death, were entitled to retired pay, or would have been entitled, but for being under the age of 60, are eligible; a copy of the Reserve Retirement Eligibility Benefits Letter must accompany the claim. Reservists called to active duty other than training and National Guard members who are Federalized and who serve for the period called are eligible.

**Who Can Apply:** Federal regulation defines "applicant" as the decedent's Next of Kin (NOK); a person authorized in writing by the NOK; or a personal representative authorized in writing by the decedent. Written authorization must be included with claim. A notarized statement is not required.

**How to Submit a Claim:** FAX claims and supporting documents to: 1-800-455-7143. If faxing more than one claim - fax each claim package (claim plus supporting documents) individually (disconnect the call and redial for each submission). MAIL claims to: Memorial Programs Service (41B), Department of Veterans Affairs, 5109 Russell Road, Quantico, VA 22134-3903. A VA medallion may be furnished only upon receipt of a fully completed and signed claim with required supporting documentation.

**Signatures Required:** The applicant must sign in Block 12A. The applicant must be the Next of Kin or an authorized representative of the decedent or the Next of Kin.

**Assistance Needed:** If assistance is needed to complete this claim, you may contact VA's Applicant Assistance Unit toll free at: 1-800-697-6947, or via e-mail at [mps.headstones@va.gov](mailto:mps.headstones@va.gov). No fee should be

paid in connection with the preparation of this claim. For more information regarding medallion eligibility, affixing procedures, and sizes, visit website at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov)

**Delivery:** The medallion is shipped without charge to the name/address designated in Block 13 of the claim. The Government is not responsible for costs associated with affixing the medallion to the privately purchased headstone or marker. Appropriate affixing adhesives, hardware and instructions are provided with the medallion. To avoid delays in the production and delivery of the medallion, please check carefully to be sure you have accurately furnished all required information and documents before faxing or mailing the claim. The Government is not responsible for costs associated with affixing the medallion to the privately purchased headstone or marker. Medallions furnished remain the property of the United States Government and may not be used for any purpose other than to be affixed to the privately purchased headstone or marker of an eligible deceased Veteran buried in a private cemetery.

[Source: <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-1330M.pdf> | July 2016 ++]

## **VA DISABILITY RATING USES CREATIVE MATH**

When it comes to service-connected compensation claims, the VA takes the view that it should not add whole numbers together to get your rating but, instead, the VA takes percentages of percentages. It is as if the VA says if you are 10% disabled then you are 90% healthy. Therefore, the next rating is not added but is used to take a percentage of the 'healthy' 90%. So for a veteran with two 10 ratings the first ten percent rating would be 10% of 100, which is 10%. The second ten percent rating would be 10% of the 90% (again the 'healthy' percent of the veteran), which is 9%. So the combined rating would be 19%. The percentages are all rounded up or down to the nearest ten percent. Here, the rating would be rounded to 20%.

The combined rating system starts to work against a veteran when he gets closer to 100%. It gets harder and harder to get that higher rating, especially once a veteran is over 50%. For instance, if a veteran has two ratings of 50% and two of 20% the combined rating is 80%. So even though  $50+50+20+20$  equals 140 in real math; it is only 80 in VA math. The difference that it leads to in compensation is huge. According to the VA compensation rating table, a veteran, with no dependents, rated at 80% would receive \$1,551.48 per month. A single veteran rated at 100%, on the other hand, would receive \$2,903.83 per month. This veteran receiving a rating of 100%, which is only 20% greater than the 80% rating, gets almost 100% more money a month! There are other factors that make the ratings change, too. For example, if a veteran has a rating on each leg or each arm, then those ratings are combined together and give the overall combined rating an extra boost. Also, if a veteran has too many ratings on one arm or leg then VA stops counting those ratings. Further, a veteran can step up to 100% through total disability due to individual unemployability. That veteran must show that he cannot work and that he meets a certain rating.

[Source: Veteran News Now | Matt Hill | June 17, 2016 ++]

---

## ► OTHER NEWS

### FORGOTTEN WARRIOR MEMORIAL WALL

Channahon State Park will be home to a one-of-a-kind memorial for military veterans who have lost their battles with post-traumatic stress disorder. The Forgotten Warrior Memorial Wall will be a tribute to all veterans who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and have been afflicted with PTSD and sacrificed their lives beyond the limits of active duty. The memorial, expected to open in November, was funded through private donations to Chicago-based nonprofit K9s For Veteran Warriors. K9s For Veteran Warriors CEO Michael Tellerino said it's proper to have memorials for veterans who lost their lives in battle; however, currently no memorials exist for the countless veterans who have taken their own lives while fighting another war at home – PTSD.

“How can we honor them for paying the ultimate price?” Tellerino said. “They come home with wounds you can't see. People don't understand how serious this is.” One statistic Tellerino cited suggests about 22 veterans commit suicide each day, but that's just based on veterans who have registered for benefits. He said the real number is between 28 and 32 a day. “That's not acceptable,” he said. “We wanted to acknowledge that sons, daughters, brothers and sisters have not died in vain. We hope this will give some healing to their families and raise public awareness.”



*Artist's rendering of the future Forgotten Warrior Memorial Wall*

Channahon State Park in Channahon has been chosen as the site of The Forgotten Warrior Memorial Wall that will honor veterans who have lost their battle to post-traumatic stress disorder. The memorial, which will cost more than \$80,000, will be constructed in an existing circular turnaround area of the park and be comprised largely of granite. Tellerino initially wanted to etch the names of each veteran lost to PTSD into the memorial, but said it would be an exhaustive process to get every name from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Instead, families will have individual bricks etched with their loved ones' names on a

volunteer basis. He said that since announcing the memorial last week, he received a call from a woman in tears. “She was so excited about doing this,” he said. “It’s so long overdue for these guys.”

The organization chose Channahon because it has easy access from the Chicago metropolitan area and the specific spot in the park is perfect for what the architects of the project have designed. The nonprofit also wanted the memorial to be relatively close to Marseilles, which is home to the Middle East Conflicts Wall Memorial along the Illinois River. Illinois State Parks and Recreation and state legislators have already signed off on the project, he said. "This one-of-a-kind memorial will provide a place for family members, other veterans, and the public to honor those service men and women whose injuries, while perhaps not physically apparent, were no less devastating,” Channahon Mayor Missey Moorman Schumacher said in a news release. K9s For Veteran Warriors provides service dogs to veterans with PTSD, along with medical care and food for the life of the dog. Tellerino said that although it is not a cure-all, the initiative plays a major role in improving the spirits of veterans.

[Source: Morris Herald News | Mike Mallory | July 26, 2016 ++]

## **ZERO-RATED CHARITY CLOSES**

The National Vietnam Veterans Foundation, a zero-rated charity that was the subject of a CNN report, has closed its doors for good, according to one of the group's executives. The watchdog group Charity Navigator gave the foundation zero out of four stars. According to its public tax returns, the foundation took in \$29 million over a four-year period, and nearly all of it went to telemarketers and fundraisers.

## **VA EUL PROGRAM FOR HOMELESS VETS**

Veterans are being touched by the Enhanced-Use-Lease EUL program, a “portfolio management tool” that VA deploys to revitalize underused VA properties—and change the lives of thousands of formerly homeless Veterans. It is operated by the Office of Asset Enterprise Management. The EUL program enables VA to solve two issues: affordable, permanent housing for homeless Veterans and their families and the surplus of idle or underused VA property in communities across the United States. The EUL program allows VA to lease its property to the private sector for approved supportive housing and related projects for Veterans who do not have safe, stable housing. VA-leased apartment building EUL projects must provide Veterans with a well-rounded and integrated experience, and so in addition to supportive housing, VA’s EUL partners often offer Veterans services such as job training, financial management, haircuts, computer and laundry facilities, fitness centers and more.



Veterans and their families are prioritized for EUL developments, which are also convenient to VA health care facilities. So far, through the EUL program over 2,200 units of housing for homeless Veterans, Veterans at-risk of homeless, and their families have been constructed nationwide and an additional 500 units are under construction to serve Veterans and their families within the next one to two years. Moreover, we continue working to develop more than 1,500



additional units that in the future will serve Veterans and their families. In addition to the services and amenities available through EUL housing, Veterans benefit from regular opportunities to interact with each other.

For more information check out:

EUL Program <http://www.va.gov/ASSETMANAGEMENT/index.asp>

VA's Office of Asset Enterprise Management

<http://www.va.gov/oaem/index.asp><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j-IyHQqtC1E;%20http://www.va.gov/ASSETMANAGEMENT>

EUL Program Video VA's homeless programs <http://www.va.gov/homeless> Encourage Veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless to call or visit their local VA Medical Center (<http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isflash=1>) where VA staff are ready to assist, or ask them to call 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838).

[Source: VAntage Point Blog | July 29, 2016 ++]

---

## ► REUNIONS

### **ALL ROUTES REUNION**

#### **Springfield, MO**

By Harlan Olson

In the interest of moving the combined route reunion that has been held in Colorado Springs, CO the last three years, the 2016 combined route reunion was moved to Springfield, MO and hosted by DeWayne and Linda Howard. We need to give DeWayne and Linda a huge token of appreciation, as they pulled off a wonderfully organized event.

The reunion was held from Thursday, July 7th thru Sunday, Sunday July 10th. There were several guided tour rides through the Branson area and hills, which proved to be a lot of fun if you like rolling hills and twisties. While RFTW riders were out having fun on the bikes, the RFTW Board of Directors were busy with their face to face meeting to begin planning for the 2017 Run event.

The weekend was capped off by a dinner/meeting banquet on Saturday evening where RFTW riders could interact with BOD members. Many good questions were asked and responded to by the Board members. In addition, updates were shared on how RFTW can help schools that are in distress by the flooding in the Rainelle, WV area. DeWayne and Linda indicated they would host the reunion in July 2017 and the RFTW BOD has again agreed to hold their summer face to face to coincide. Put it on your calendar and be looking for details.

### **ANGEL FIRE REUNION**

#### **Eagle Nest/Angel Fire, NM**

By Dick "Winky" McKay

## Central Route Coordinator

On Thursday, September 1, RFTW riders from Ohio to California converged on Albuquerque, New Mexico, for our reunion and annual visit to the elementary school on the Cochiti Indian Reservation. Steve Berniklau, the NM State Coordinator had reserved a block of rooms for us and had reservations at a great Mexican restaurant.

Friday morning we all mounted up and headed north to the school. Every May these children are bused to the bridge over I-25, to watch the Run For The Wall pass by. The teachers use RFTW to encourage the students to study—if you don't study, you don't get to go. The children were waiting for us when we arrived. They led us in the Pledge of Allegiance and then lined up to shake our hands. The riders passed out RFTW pins and stickers, and spent time with the children and staff. These are great kids, and are being taught patriotism and love of their country.

After leaving the school, we rode the same route RFTW takes to Angel Fire, having lunch at the Camel Rock Casino. We spent a wonderful evening at the Saloon, catching up on the latest news with our brothers and sisters. Saturday dawned clear and bright and we rode to the Memorial to begin the bricklaying. The paths at the David Westphall Vietnam Memorial are lined with commemorative bricks, and every Labor Day weekend RFTW lays all the bricks that have been purchased during the year. This year we laid 387 bricks and 8 Medal of Honor bricks. After the last brick was put in place, 128 riders headed back to Eagle Nest for a dinner hosted by Mayor Richard Cordova, and the good folks of the town. After dinner Jenny Ward gave us an update on the coats for Rainelle kids. During her update we passed the hat and raised \$1,805. After a great meal the riders got to have a question and answer session with five of the Board of Directors of RFTW.

The Angel Fire reunion was a great success due to the meticulous planning of Bill “Rocket” Rager, Steve “Spuner” Berniklau, and Freddie “Crash” Strickland. These folks worked for months to ensure that everything would go perfectly, and they certainly succeeded this year. On behalf of all the riders, I thank you.

*Thanks to Judy “Lil Bit” Aitken for these photos:*







## KERRVILLE REUNION REPORT

Kerrville, TX

By Kris Wood

(Photos from Roger Mead)

Hello from Kerrville, Texas and the 2016 Kerrville Reunion, open to all RFTW riders. It was held at the beautiful Y.O. Ranch Hotel.



This was my FNG year at Kerrville. I was totally wowed by the reunion, Texas, and Kerrville. I highly recommend attending the reunion. Many of the riders arrived early, Wednesday and Thursday, in time to enjoy the Friday ride through the Texas Hill Country. What a beautiful ride Sapper put together for us. We rode 120 miles, stopping for lunch at a little Texas road stop called Hill BillyZ. The food was great and the



scenery was beautiful. BillyZ makes a great meatball stew.

Friday night we had dinner at the Kerrville VFW Post #1480. A real Texas B-B- Q awaited us with delicious baked beans and smoked brisket. The dinner had no formal program, which gave the riders time to catch up with old friends and make some new friends. I met and spoke with many road guards that previous to the reunion I hardly knew. The Road Guards are just too tired and too busy to do much socializing on the run. Since the reunion I know more about them and have a deeper appreciation of and understanding for the job they do.



One of the best things about the Kerrville Reunion is the opportunity to get to know fellow riders better. Saturday morning we met at the VFW post for a delicious breakfast of eggs, bacon, sausage, and hash browns. A great feast for only \$8. A big thank you to the members of VFW Post #1480 for feeding RFTW two meals during the reunion. It was so nice for the riders to be able to gather together to share a meal and socialize and at a reasonable price.

Immediately following the breakfast it was kickstands up for another ride through the Texas Hill Country (one can never tire of the beautiful scenery and winding roads). This ride was approximately 130 miles, once again organized by Sapper. Part of the ride took us on "The Snake." What a fun ride! We stopped to admire the motorcycles at the Lone Star Motorcycle Museum. Some riders were "remembering when" they rode a bike like that. It was fun to hear the stories.

Upon our return to the YO Resort we had a brief riders meeting where we were introduced to the 2017 leadership and the mission statement for 2017. If you want to learn more about our leadership team and the mission go to the new RFTW website [RFTW.US](http://RFTW.US).

Saturday night was the banquet dinner, auction, raffle, and roasting. Many, many items were auctioned and raffled. The proceeds from the evening will be going to assist General's Driver with the massive medical bills that are accumulating during his hospital stay. Continued prayers are requested on his behalf.





A big thank you to all who assisted in organizing and implementing the Kerrville Reunion, especially Cowboy and Sam. A great time was had by all!

---

## ► PENDING LEGISLATION

### HOUSE LEGISLATION:

On September 12 and 14 the House passed four veteran-related bills:

- H.R. 3471, the Veterans Mobility Safety Act, as amended, would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to develop a comprehensive policy regarding quality standards for providers who dispense modification services to veterans under the Automobile Adaptive Equipment Program. The bill would also authorize VA to hire and prescribe qualifications for hiring hearing aid specialists.
- H.R. 5936, the West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016, as amended, would authorize VA to carry out certain leases on VA's Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System West LA Medical Center campus in Los Angeles, Calif., and prohibit VA from entering into any land-sharing agreements unless the agreements provide additional health care resources and benefit veterans and their families in ways other than generating additional revenue. In addition, it would require VA to submit an annual report regarding leases and land-sharing agreements on the West LA VAMC campus and mandate that VA's inspector general produce reports regarding the leases and implementation of VA's master plan for the campus.
- H.R. 5937, as amended, would authorize the American Battle Monuments Commission to acquire, operate and maintain the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial located outside Paris, France.
- H.R. 5620, the VA Accountability First and Appeals Modernization Act of 2016, a bipartisan legislation that would reform the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs appeals process and reduce wait time for veterans' claims. These bills now await consideration by the Senate. Following House passage of the bills, Chairman Miller, Chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, released the following statement: "The legislation the House passed today will help bring much-needed accountability and efficiency to VA's long-troubled West Los Angeles campus, enhance VA's hearing health services and honor the service and sacrifice of a special group of World War I veterans. I applaud my colleagues in the House for their actions and call on the Senate to consider these bills in short order."

[Source: HVAS Press Release | September 12 & 14, 2016 ++]

*To follow these bills, go to*

<http://beta.congress.gov/search?q=%7B%22source%22%3A%22legislation%22%7D#>

## **SENATE:**

During the week of September 19-23 the Senate advanced four veterans bills that were recently passed by the House. The bills include:

- H.R. 1475, the Korean War Veterans Memorial Wall of Remembrance Act to authorize the construction of a wall of remembrance at the Korean War Veterans Memorial. H.R. 1475 was amended by the Senate and Page 41 of 108 must be reconsidered by the House before being sent to the president. The other three bills now await the president's signature.
- H.R. 5936, the Veterans Care Agreement and West Los Angeles Leasing Act of 2016, to authorize VA to enter into needed leases in West Los Angeles.
- H.R. 5937 to authorize the American Battle Monuments Commission to acquire, operate and maintain the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial in Marnes-la-Coquette, France.
- H.R. 5985, the VA Expiring Authorities Act of 2016 to extend a number of important veterans programs set to expire this year and provide relief for veterans impacted by the closure of ITT campuses around the country.

[Source: VFW | Action Corps Weekly | September 23, 2016 ++]

---

## **► BRINGING THEM HOME**

As of August 31, 2016, the number of Americans who remain missing from conflicts in this century are: World War II (73,515) Korean War (7,841), Cold War (126), Vietnam War (1,627), 1991 Gulf War (5), and Libya (1).

## **WWII**

**Navy Fireman 1st Class Jim H. Johnston** and **Seaman 1st Class Murry R. Cargile**, killed in the attack on the USS Oklahoma on Dec. 7, 1941, have now been accounted for. The USS Oklahoma (BB-37) arrived in Pearl Harbor on Dec. 6, 1940, and spent the next several months participating in exercises and conducting patrols. On the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, a fleet of Japanese carriers launched formations of dive bombers, torpedo planes and fighters against the vessels moored in the shallows of Pearl Harbor. The USS Oklahoma suffered 429 casualties as it quickly capsized due to damages sustained from multiple torpedoes. The majority of the casualties (Sailors and Marines) were never identified. During efforts to salvage the vessel, Navy personnel collected a large number of remains representing as many as 400 individuals. Most of these were later buried as unknowns at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu. In 2015, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency personnel exhumed these remains and as



a result in advances in forensic and analytical capabilities, were able to identify Johnston. Interment services are pending.

**Marine Pfc. James F. Mansfield**, 19, was buried Aug. 27 in his hometown of Plymouth, Mass. In November 1943, Mansfield was assigned to Company K, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines, 2nd Marine Division, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded, but the Japanese were virtually annihilated. Mansfield died on the first day of battle, Nov. 20, 1943.

The battle of Tarawa was a huge victory for the U.S. military because the Gilbert Islands provided the U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet a platform from which to launch assaults on the Marshall and Caroline Islands to advance their Central Pacific Campaign against Japan.

In the immediate aftermath of the fighting on Tarawa, U.S. service members who died in the battle were buried in a number of battlefield cemeteries on the island. In 1946 and 1947, the 604th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company conducted remains recovery operations on Betio Island, but Mansfield's remains were not recovered. On Feb. 28, 1949, a military review board declared Mansfield's remains non-recoverable.

In June 2015, a nongovernmental organization, History Flight, Inc., notified DPAA that they discovered a burial site on Betio Island and recovered the remains of what they believed were 35 U.S. Marines who fought during the battle in November 1943. The remains were turned over to DPAA in July 2015.

To identify Mansfield's remains, scientists from DPAA and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used mitochondrial DNA and autosomal Short Tandem Repeat DNA analysis, which matched a sister; laboratory analysis, including dental analysis and anthropological comparison, which matched Mansfield's records; as well as circumstantial and material evidence.

DPAA is grateful to History Flight, Inc. for this recovery mission.

**Navy Lt. Julian B. Jordan**, 37, of Dawson, Ga., was buried Aug. 29 in Bremerton, Wash. On Dec. 7, 1941, Jordan was assigned aboard the USS Oklahoma, which capsized after sustaining multiple torpedo hits as the battleship was moored off Ford Island in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The attack resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen. With the exception of the USS Arizona, no single ship at Pearl Harbor suffered more fatalities. From December 1941 to June 1944, Navy personnel recovered the remains of the deceased crew, which were subsequently interred in the Halawa and Nu'uano Cemeteries. In September 1947, tasked with recovering and identifying fallen U.S. personnel in the Pacific Theater, members of the American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) disinterred the remains of U.S. casualties from the two cemeteries and transferred them to the Central Identification Laboratory at Schofield Barracks. The laboratory staff was only able to confirm the identifications of 35 men from the USS Oklahoma at that time. The AGRS subsequently buried the unidentified remains in 46 plots at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP), known as the Punchbowl, in Honolulu. In October 1949, a military board classified those who could not be identified as non-recoverable, including Jordan. In April 2015, the Deputy Secretary of Defense issued a policy memorandum directing the disinterment of unknowns associated with the USS Oklahoma. On June 15, 2015, DPAA personnel began exhuming the remains from the NMCP for analysis. To identify Jordan's remains, scientists from DPAA and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory

used mitochondrial DNA analysis, which matched three cousins, as well as circumstantial evidence and laboratory analysis, to include dental comparisons, which matched Jordan's records.

**Marine Pfc. Anthony Brozyna**, 22, of Hartford, Conn. was buried Aug. 31 in Arlington National Cemetery. In November 1943, Brozyna was assigned to Company G, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, which landed against stiff Japanese resistance on the small island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll of the Gilbert Islands. Over several days of intense fighting at Tarawa, approximately 1,000 Marines and sailors were killed and more than 2,000 were wounded, but the Japanese were virtually annihilated. Brozyna died on the first day of the battle, Nov. 20, 1943. In June 2015, a nongovernmental organization, History Flight, Inc., notified DPAA that they discovered a burial site on Betio Island and recovered the remains of what they believed were 35 U.S. Marines who fought during the battle in November 1943. The remains were turned over to DPAA in July 2015. To identify Brozyna's remains, scientists from DPAA used laboratory analysis, including dental comparison, which matched Brozyna's records, as well as circumstantial and material evidence.

DPAA is appreciative to History Flight, Inc. and their partnership for this recovery mission.

**Army Capt. Elwood J. Euart**, 28, was buried Aug. 31 in his hometown of Pawtucket, R.I. On Oct. 26, 1942, Euart was assigned to Headquarters, 103rd Field Artillery Battalion, 43rd Infantry Division, aboard an Army transport ship that struck two mines near Espiritu Santo Island, New Hebrides, in the Republic of Vanuatu. The ship was beached on a nearby coral reef and evacuated. Hearing that men were trapped inside, Euart entered the sinking ship to help the men escape. The ship rolled and slid off the reef an hour later. Euart was one of only two crewmen lost out of approximately 5,000 troops aboard. The captain would be posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in 1943. In August 1948, a search team from the U.S. Army's 604th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company visited Espiritu Santo Island to investigate and recover personnel from underwater losses, including the USAT President Coolidge. However, due to depths involved, they were unable to investigate or recover any remains from that ship. Based on this information, on Sept. 23, 1948, the Army declared Euart's remains non-recoverable. In 1953, the sunken hulk of the USAT President Coolidge was sold for salvage, and the area became a world-class diving destination. In 2012, divers reported finding human remains inside the ship and hid them deep into the silt to keep them safe. In 2014, a JPAC underwater recovery leader accompanied a tour company diver, who pulled possible human remains out of the silt. In March 2015, an underwater recovery team from DPAA recovered additional possible human remains and material evidence from inside the ship. To identify Euart's remains, scientists from DPAA and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used mitochondrial and Y-Short Tandem Repeat DNA analysis, which matched three nephews; laboratory analysis, including dental and anthropological analysis, which matched Euart's records; and circumstantial and material evidence.

## **KOREAN WAR:**

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced the identification of remains and burial updates of 2 U.S. servicemen who had been previously listed as missing in action. Returning home for burial with full military honors are: **Army Pvt. Virgil B. Adkins**, of Summers, W.Va., who was scheduled to be buried with full military honors on Sept. 3 in Hinton, W.Va. On July 17, 1953, Adkins was a member of Company B, 1st Battalion, 65th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, on a combat patrol to reconnoiter enemy activity in an area north of the former Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), North Korea, when it came under attack, forcing a withdrawal back to friendly lines. As a result of the fighting, Adkins was reported missing in action. Between 1990 and 1994, North Korea returned to the United States 208 boxes of commingled



human remains, which helped account for the remains of at least 600 U.S. servicemen who fought during the war. Lab analysis, in conjunction with the totality of circumstantial evidence available, established Adkins' remains were included.

**Army Sgt. James L. Campbell**, 18, was buried Aug. 31 in his hometown of Waterford, Conn. On the night of Nov. 27, 1950, Campbell, who was assigned to the 31st Regimental Combat Team, was attacked and forced into a fighting withdrawal from their positions on the east side of the Chosin River in North Korea. He would be reported missing after the battle.

## VIETNAM WAR:

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced on September 9 that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing from the Vietnam War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors. **Air Force Maj. Dean A. Klenda**, 25, of Marion, Kansas, was buried September 17 in Pilsen, Kansas. On September 17, 1965, Klenda was assigned to the 67th Tactical Fighter

Squadron as the pilot of an F-105D

Thunderchief that was attacking enemy targets in Son La Province, Vietnam. During Klenda's mission, his aircraft was struck by enemy fire causing him to eject from the Thunderchief. He failed to separate from his ejection seat before it impacted the ground. Klenda was reported as missing in action; however, a military review board later amended his status to dead, body not recovered. Between 1993 and 1999, multiple joint U.S./Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) teams conducted investigations of the crash site. The teams identified the site that was believed to be where



Klenda's ejection seat impacted the ground. No remains were recovered at the time of the investigations. On Nov. 10, 2011, another joint U.S./S.R.V. team re-investigated the loss in Son La Province and interviewed a Vietnamese national who claimed that in 1996 he found remains at the site where the ejection seat was believed to have impacted. The Vietnamese man told the team that he discarded the remains in an agricultural field five kilometers away from the crash site. From Nov. 4 to Nov. 29, 2014, a joint U.S./S.R.V. team excavated the site where the Vietnamese national claimed to have discarded the remains. The recovery team located and recovered human remains. In the identification of Klenda, scientists from DPAA and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used circumstantial evidence and dental comparisons, including isotopic analysis, which matched his records.

---

## ► SICK CALL

**Mike "General's Driver" Jones**, Southern Route Ambassador Lead and Advance Team member this year, was in a serious motorcycle accident Sept. 17 in Kansas. He and the General were on their way to the RFTW Reunion in Texas. Mike was taken to Overland Park Regional Hospital with broken ribs and vertebrae,



clavicle, and back, and bleeding on the brain, but was in stable condition. His daughter Amanda has been at his side constantly. On Sept. 21 Mike was still in critical condition and in a medically induced coma. But his kidney functions were improving and doctors were also impressed with his blood work. On Sept 30 he had surgery to insert a plate in his chest to support his ribs and alleviate some of the pain.



Sadly, Mike's beloved companion, the General, did not survive the accident.

There are presently two fundraising efforts to help Mike's family with expenses:

A GoFundMe account has been created to provide a family-approved way to raise funds to support Michael and his recovery. <https://www.gofundme.com/2q4mkss>.

The AmeriVAL Group has prepared a video tribute that celebrates Michael and the General together. Filmed during Run For The Wall 2016, this footage is just part of the 300 hours being edited for the final "Brotherhood of Thunder: The Story of American Warriors and their Motorcycles" docuseries scheduled for release Veterans Day, November 11. [https://youtu.be/0\\_0YAtvLB1g](https://youtu.be/0_0YAtvLB1g). This project was designed to tell the story of veterans and their participation in RFTW, with all net proceeds going to worthy causes. The AmeriVAL Group has spoken with Michael's family, and they are aware that AmeriVAL will be sending \$10 from the sale of every DVD sold in October to assist Michael and his family. This is in addition to contributions to RFTW and RT from each DVD. Just visit the website [www.brotherhoodofthunder.com](http://www.brotherhoodofthunder.com) and enter GENERAL in the PROMO CODE box, and AmeriVAL will forward the proceeds to Michael's family.

---

## ► TAPS

**Joe Hosteen Kellwood, Navajo Code Talker** Navajo code talker Joe Hosteen Kellwood died September 5 at age 95. He passed away at the Veterans Hospital in Phoenix, AZ. Kellwood served in the First Marine Division and fought during World War II in the Pacific front, seeing battle in Cape Gloucester, Peleliu, and Okinawa. He was awarded the Congressional Silver Medal, Presidential Unit Citation, Combat Action Ribbon, Naval Unit Commendation, Good Conduct, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal and WWII Victory Medal.

Kellwood was born in Steamboat Canyon, Arizona, in August 20, 1921. When he was 10, he was sent to a school at an Apache reservation run by the US military. He couldn't speak English so he was punished when he spoke in his native language. During World War II, he wanted to enlist in the Marine Corps after reading about efforts in the Battle of Guadalcanal. He had no idea the code talkers existed when he enlisted in 1942, since it was a secret program. Kellwood passed away just three days after his older brother Roy, who also served in WWII, died at age 101. Their funerals were held at the same time.



Copyright Jack Kurtz

Of the approximately 540 Navajo Code Talkers, only a handful remain, although the exact number is in dispute because the names were kept secret for so many years. Various sources give numbers ranging from 7 to 27.

## ***You Are Not Forgotten***

